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## A genealogical analysis of Peter Arnold's conceptual account of meaning in movement, sport and physical education

### Abstract

*We write as critical theorists who share an interest in how conceptions of physical education are taken forward in policy and practice. In this respect, we are particularly intrigued by Peter Arnold's conceptual account and the subsequent ways in which his ideas have informed national curriculum ambitions. Despite the prominence of Arnold's influence, we are concerned that there has been an insufficiently rigorous and robust review of his theorising to date, particularly in relation to educational-theoretical terms surrounding where his ideas originated from. Accordingly, we critically discuss the merits of adopting a genealogical approach in order to support a detailed analysis of Arnold's conceptual account of meaning in movement, sport and physical education; one which especially focuses on learning "about", "through" and "in" movement. We conclude by questioning a number of the complex strands of Arnold's work in the expectation that greater clarity and purpose can emerge. This it is argued will be beneficial in terms of providing clarity on aim or aims statements in physical education, which in turn can secure greater policy coherence and practice gains.*

**Keywords:** Arnold; genealogy; "about", "through" and "in"; physical education; meaning; movement

### Introduction

Peter Arnold's (1979a, 1979b, 1985, 1988) work is often held-up as the "gold-standard" in physical education and sport pedagogy curriculum design, particularly in countries like Australia. For instance, the *Physical Education Senior Syllabus* (2004, 2010) developed by the Queensland Studies Authority (Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority as of July 2014) borrows heavily from Arnold's conceptual account of "about", "through" and "in" (see Rationale section). Central to Arnold's work is the educational implications of the concept of movement, particularly the notion of "meaning". Arnold's use of the term "meaning" is crucial to understanding his work as it provides the foundation of his "three dimensions of movement": Dimension I: education *about* movement; Dimension II: education *through* movement; and Dimension III: education *in* movement. These dimensions relate to the place of movement within the curriculum of "general education" (see for example Arnold, 1979a). The crux of Arnold's argument for movement as a "subject" within the curriculum, is as follows: (1) persons have the capacity to experience a range of different modes or kinds of meaning; (2) engaging in certain movement forms involves coming to understand personal knowledge (synnoetic realm) in a meaningful way; (3) personally meaningful experiences share similarities with other forms of knowledge (aesthetic realm) developed in the curriculum like the arts; and, (4) hence, education must include movement in the curriculum if it is serious about a well-balanced general education of a person.

We find it interesting that even though *Meaning in Movement, Sport and Physical Education* was published some thirty or so years ago, Arnold's three dimensions of movement ("about", "through" and "in") now underpins the proposed curriculum document *Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Health and Physical Education* (2012) that maps out the future direction of the Australian Curriculum for Health and Physical Education from

Foundation to Year 10 (F-10). It would appear to be *de rigueur* to argue in the literature (see for example Brown, 2013a, 2013b, 2013c; Brown & Penney, 2013; Jones et al., 2014) that Arnold's work has been "lost" to the point that it ought to be "re(articulated)" and "re(emphasised)" so it is suitable for contemporary physical education (Brown, 2013b) and/or viewed as alternative "ways of knowing" (Brown & Penney, 2013). Indeed, a particular issue we have at the moment concerns the trend in physical education and sport pedagogy that seems to unquestionably accept Arnold's conceptual account without due consideration to how the concept was influenced by history to serve a certain purpose. Of course, one might wonder, why is Arnold's conceptual account of "about", "through, and "in" of such concern, particularly when it is held in such high esteem in the academic domain. In order to explain why a concept exists in its present form requires careful attention to past forms and transformations from which it emerged. The purpose served by such an undertaking is to come to an understanding of the various interpretations and meanings that explain its current character. It also suggests that concepts need clarification because they are products of a complicated historical development that have been synthesised from a range of diverse ideas into one concept that will remain hidden from us until they have been revealed.

This approach raises a number of rather awkward questions, such as: What are the ancestors or origins from which Arnold's work come from? Are the origins of his work based on educational principles that are sound? Are Arnold's ideas in any sense "new" or just reconceptualised ideas? We are cognisant that there is a risk that we may be perceived by some as being unnecessarily critical and subversive to be asking these questions, however, there is merit in analysing Arnold's conceptual account. These reasons may range from coming to understand the origin or origins of Arnold's work, to shine a light on under developed and incoherent ideas, and most importantly to highlight its limitations. Consequently, for the purposes of this paper we will critically discuss three issues: firstly, we outline why we have adopted a genealogical approach and provide an overall structure of our genealogical analysis; secondly, we undertake a genealogical analysis of Arnold's conceptual account of meaning in movement, sport and physical education; and lastly, we piece together the strands of Arnold's work in order to understand the limitations better in the hope that something radically new will emerge.

### **Why a genealogical approach?**

To undertake a genealogy is to map out the ancestors from which an individual or family has come from. Our usage derives from Friedrich Nietzsche's (1887/1998) use of the word "genealogy" in his book titled *On the Genealogy of Morality*. As Nietzsche provides an extensive analysis of the concept of morality and a detailed explanation of what he considers morality to be (see for example Nietzsche, 1883–1885/1961, 1886/1973, 1887/1998), much can be gained from utilising his genealogical framework (Nietzsche, 1887/1998) to analyse other concepts of note. According to Nietzsche (1887/1998), to explain why something exists would be to trace it back through past forms of its "meaning" from which it appears in its present form in order to show how something came to be "interpreted" differently from its original point and purpose. If Nietzsche's approach is correct, then any concept or concepts in question will have quite a different meaning from which it emerged due to a series of functions imposed on it, to the point that it was "taken over" and reinterpreted by others to serve a new purpose. Our point that we wish to emphasise is that a genealogical analysis of Arnold's conceptual account of "about", "through" and "in" can play an important role in conceptual clarification as it can help isolate the core strands that have become so tightly intertwined that they seem inseparable. Nietzsche (1887/1998, p. 53; II, §13) in discussing the earlier stages of the "synthesis of meanings" argues that concepts will appear:

... more soluble, also more capable of shifts; one can still perceive in each individual case how the elements of the synthesis change their valence and rearrange themselves

accordingly, so that now this, now that element comes to the fore and dominates at the expense of the remaining ones, indeed in some cases one element ... seems to cancel out all the rest of the elements.

We now offer an overall structure of our genealogical analysis of Arnold's conceptual account of "about", "through" and "in" that incorporates Nietzsche's genealogical structure of conceptual clarification. Our genealogical analysis of Arnold's conceptual account has identified the intertwining of two major strands, which are his response to two different questions. For the point and purpose of our paper we will refer to these as: Genealogy I: the ideal of progressivism in education; and, Genealogy II: the person is an embodied being-in-the-world that derives personal meaning from what he or she does.

Although, we are cognisant that the actual development of each took place in interaction with each other, the point of treating each in isolation is to emphasise that they are separable aspects which Arnold's intertwining makes difficult to fully appreciate. It is important to acknowledge that this kind of historical analysis will not make it possible to specify the exact point at which Arnold's ideas came from, but it will give us a means of identifying how Arnold's ideas are a product of a complicated historical development that have been interpreted and reinterpreted for quite different purposes today. To see this, however, readers need to be willing to piece together the genealogical accounts of the two major strands treated separately, but come to understand that it was only through their interaction that Arnold's conceptual account came to be.

### **Genealogy I: the ideal of progressivism in education**

In response to traditional (or subject-centred) forms of education which construes knowledge in narrowly defined intellectualist terms (Hirst, 1974) and omits practical activities as merely "of knack" rather than of understanding (Peters, 1966), Arnold (1979a) set out to explore both the concept of movement in relation to education and at the same time argues for its inclusion in the curriculum. Borrowing heavily from Phenix (1964) he argues that personal knowledge (synnoetic realm) is its own form of knowledge, and as a result just as important as Hirst's (1974) forms of knowledge thesis. It is not until we, however, go back to Arnold's (1968) preceding work entitled *Education, Physical Education and Personality Development* that we get a sense of his initial thoughts on experiential learning which has its origins in Dewey's (1938/1963; 1916/1966) work, particularly *Experience and Education*. We mention this here as Dewey's work on progressive education (or student-centred) feature in Arnold's work, particularly the notion that dynamic interactions between the body and the mind can play an important role in synthesising experiences in activity contexts. Arnold recognised Dewey's notion of the "whole child" approach and the purpose of education as a mechanism for transmitting the cultural values of a society through interaction with the group. This is evident by a wide ranging focus on the interconnections between the "educational, psycho-social and bio-philosophic" in building a critique of how physical education relates both to the personality development of the child and the wider needs of society (Arnold, 1968, p. 135).

Arnold's recognition of and interest in Dewey, and other formulators of new theories of his time, such as Jesse Feiring Williams (1930, 1951, 1964) who is mostly known for his famous statement showing the progression of physical education from a subject concerned with education *of* the physical to one which purported to education *through* the physical. For instance, Williams (1964, p. 8) in the 8<sup>th</sup> edition of his book entitled *The Principles of Physical Education* writes:

When mind and body are thought of as two separate entities, physical education was obviously an education *of* the physical; in similar fashion mental education made its own exclusive demands. But with new understanding of the nature of the human

organism in which wholeness of the individual is the outstanding fact, physical education becomes education *through* the physical.

Although, not formally acknowledged, Williams learning nomenclature can be found in Arnold's (1968, p. 14) original book, when he argues that physical education has a role to play by "educating *by, through and of* the physical". This demonstrate that these ideas were being considered by Arnold for some years before his later and better known conceptual account of education "about", "through" and "in" movement found its way into *Meaning in Movement, Sport and Physical Education*.

**Genealogy II:** the person is an embodied being-in-the-world that derives personal meaning from what he or she does

A central feature of Arnold's work is the concept of "meaning" as it relates to movement. Arnold (1979a) makes it clear from the outset – preface section of his book – that he is interested in "what movement means" by looking at "movement as a means of fulfilling ends that lie outside itself" *through* instrumental mediums such as sport (p. xii). He goes on to add that it is only when we engage *in* movement activities do we know what movement means from the first-person point of view ("inside") as opposed to movement understood from a scientific point of view ("outside"). Arnold (1979a) makes it clear that it is the former which he is concerned with. In order, to make sense of the first-person perspective, Arnold undertakes an extensive critique surrounding what it means to be a person by utilising a branch of philosophy known as phenomenology and existentialism to make sense of our embodiment in the world. Consequently, Arnold's interpretation of "embodiment" is crucial to understanding what he means by "meaning" in movement.

In Chapter 1 (The Person as an Embodied Consciousness) Arnold (1979a) clearly outlines that his understanding of "embodiment" has been informed by the philosophical works of Marcel (1951/1960), Sartre (1943/1956) and Merleau-Ponty (1945/1962). Arnold makes it clear that the benefits of embodiment are important for two reasons: (1) embodiment is both a necessary part of our existence and consciousness; and, (2) it is the vehicle or mechanism by which we experience the world and crucial to coming to know who I am as an embodied "being in the world". Although, Arnold (1979a) does not credit Heidegger (1927/2010) with the use of the term "being-in-the-world" where it originates from, he does use the term freely, albeit without the hyphens "being in the world" (see Chapter 1) as a means to highlight that our bodies are the vehicles in which we make contact with the world, and hence make-sense of it. In general, Arnold argues that meaning is derived from being consciously engaged in and doing something that is personally meaningful to the agent in question. Here the subjective quality of the movement experience is exploring through a range and complexity of "meaningful lived experience" examples found in Chapter 2 (The Phenomenology of Action and Meaning) that attempt to emphasise three categories of meanings: (1) primordial; (2) contextual; and, (3) existential.

Later, Arnold moves to other formulations of what it means to know something in movement as a means to provide epistemic grounds for the place of movement in the curriculum. Borrowing heavily from Polanyi (1958, 1961, 1966) Arnold in Chapter 4 (Perceiving and Knowing in Movement) argues, that all knowledge is personal knowledge. Using Polanyi's (1966) account of "tacit knowing" and the fact we come to know and understand relies heavily on a complex form of internal integration. As a result, Arnold views knowing *in* movement as a form of practical knowledge that can only be understood and learnt from doing or being on the "inside". This knowledge cannot be easily articulated as experiences are deeply personal, particularly when someone is being skilful.

It is not until the last chapter (Education, Movement and the Curriculum) that Arnold brings together his ideas to argue for the place of movement in the curriculum of general education. Part of Arnold's central thesis is an alternative to the traditional-liberal curriculum of Hirst (1974). In order to overcome what he sees as a curriculum that disproportionately focuses on cognitive development ("intellectualistic terms") at the expense of other areas of human development, Arnold turns to Phenix's (1964) *Realms of Meaning* (6 realms of meaning: (1) symbolics; (2) empirics; (3) esthetics; (4) synnoetics; (5) ethics; and, (6) synoptics). Borrowing from Phenix (see preface section), Arnold (1979a, p. 163) argues that the "... development of human beings ... 'requires education in a variety of realms of meaning rather than in a single type of rationality'" which recognises that we highly complex holistic beings. Although Arnold does not deny that there are some similarities with Hirst's forms of knowledge thesis and Phenix's six realms of meaning, however, from the point of view of movement as a viable alternative, he notes two differences: (1) aesthetic; and, (2) synnoetic realm. According to Arnold, these two realms (aesthetic and synnoetic) accord the most with his preceding chapters on the person as an embodied consciousness, particularly the synnoetic realm of meaning which share similarities with the subjective quality of movement experiences. In the next section, we piece together the strands of Arnold's work in order to understand the limitations better in the hope that something radically new will emerge.

**A genealogical analysis of Arnold's work:** piecing together the strands of Arnold's work in order to understand its limitations

The historical context in which Arnold (1979a) wrote his most influential piece of work is crucial to understanding where his ideas came from. For instance, he was teaching at the female only teacher education college – Dunfermline College of Physical Education in Edinburgh (Scotland) – which was steeped in the traditions of educational gymnastics and modern dance. The reason why this is important is due to the fact that he was immersed in the female tradition of physical education – which Kirk (2010) refers to as "physical education-as-gymnastics" – that was quite different to the Scottish School of Physical Education (Glasgow, Scotland) which was the men's College that focused on a scientific-sports-related version of physical education, which Kirk (2010) refers to as "physical education-as-sport-techniques". According to Kirk (1992, 2006, 2010; Stolz & Kirk, 2015), from the 1950s to the 1970s the female version of physical education-as-gymnastics lost out to the male version of physical education-as-sports-technique that had a strong scientific and sport-orientated focus. Understandably, Arnold might have felt quite marginalised in the British context of physical education during this period. Compounding the issue further was a preoccupation with justifications for physical education that either, agreed with, adapted justifications to fit with, and/or argued against traditional-liberal forms of education (Stolz, 2014). The catalyst for this response was in part due to the work of R. S. Peters and P. H. Hirst, whose traditional-liberal (or subject centred) form of education excluded physical education from the curriculum. Arnold's initial response to both being marginalised and traditional-liberal forms of education can be found in his first book *Education, Physical Education and Personality Development* which has a wide ranging focus on the interconnections between the "educational, psycho-social and the bio-philosophic" in building a critique of how physical education relates both to the personality development of the child and the wider needs of society (Arnold, 1968). This work is rarely mentioned nowadays, but it is worth noting for three main reasons. Firstly, the influence of Dewey's views on experiential learning are in evidence with Arnold (1968) outlining, for example, the part that dynamic interactions between the body and the mind can play in synthesising experiences in activity contexts. It is also important to note, that Dewey's influence on Arnold's work is best described as superficial which is evident by six author index references to Dewey in Arnold (1968), three in Arnold (1979a) and six in Arnold (1988). Secondly, Arnold's disdain for the pernicious influence of examinations is laid bare when he criticises "... their paralysing impact, especially amongst the senior forms of our Secondary Schools ..." and argues that

those “... aspects of education that are not examined should not be squeezed out of existence” such as physical education (Arnold, 1968, p. 7). Ironically, it is in examination contexts (e.g. Queensland *Physical Education Senior Syllabus*) rather than in the non-examined subject contexts that Arnold’s work is championed. Thirdly, the learning nomenclature used has changed over time. Instead of referring to learning “about”, “through” and “in” movement, Arnold (1968, p. 14) starts out with the phrasing “educating *by, through and of* the physical”, which indicate that framework-related ideas were being considered by Arnold for some years before his later and better known learning “about”, “through” and “in” explanations began to influence policy and practice. According to Kirk (Stolz & Kirk, 2013) in a recent scholarly interview<sup>1</sup>, the usage of the term “education *of* the physical” was an old idea that came out of the physical training literature which was popular in America and is most easily equated with the “in” dimension which he extended upon with his interpretation and reinterpretation of engaging in movement that is meaningful. The education “through” dimension came about in the 1950s, when there was a shift from an education *of* the physical to an education *through* the physical in physical education as a result of the child-centred movement of the time (Kirk, 2014). As for the “about” dimension, this is a recent invention that was influenced by the development of sport and exercise science in the academicisation of the school curriculum (Stolz & Kirk, 2013).

What is of interest to our analysis is how Arnold’s work found its way into Australian curriculum documents, particularly Queensland where his work first appeared in the *Physical Education Pilot Senior Syllabus* in the mid-1990s (Queensland Board of Senior Secondary School Studies, 1995) followed by iterations in 2004 and 2010 (Queensland Studies Authority, 2004, 2010), and now underpins the proposed Australian Curriculum for Health and Physical Education (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2012). According to Kirk (Stolz & Kirk, 2013), Arnold’s ideas found their way into the curriculum in Queensland (Australia) through two means: firstly, through his book titled *Physical Education and Curriculum Study*; and, secondly the Chair of the State Review Panel translated some of these ideas from Kirk’s (1988) book into the Queensland *Physical Education Senior Syllabus* in the mid-1990s that worked pragmatically. It is interesting to note that Kirk’s book provided one of the first occasions where Arnold’s (1979a) theorising was further contextualised as a framework device that “... may be useful for theorising the form and content of physical education in relation to its educational status in schools” (Kirk, 1988, p. 71). In this relatively brief chapter (Chapter 4), Arnold’s theorising of learning “about”, “through” and “in” is the only framework of note which is outlined. Later in the chapter, Kirk’s (1988, p. 80) assessment of the merits Arnold’s theorising is more affirming when he notes that it needs:

... to be firmly emphasised that physical education is essentially concerned with education “about”, “through”, and “in” movement and it is the study and practice of physical activity that renders physical education an indispensable subject in a balanced educational programme.

Although, this would appear to be quite a glowing endorsement of Arnolds work from a well-respected academic; however, the problem is that engagements with Arnold’s (1979a) ideas seem to have had a rather chequered pattern of development over the last thirty-five years. Whilst we agree with Brown (2013b) to a point that Arnold’s work has often informed international curriculum developments and has also been variously interpreted and misunderstood at times, we also continue to highlight our concern that his claim that Arnold’s work “possesses more currency than ‘other’ holistic frameworks or models” (Brown, 2013b, p. 23) is highly questionable, both in terms of his lack of specification regarding which “other” models he might be referring to, and also in how models are currently being taken

forward in physical education. Part of the problem as we see it, concerns a lack of ideas within the physical education space in which to work with that has often led to quite incoherent ideas, such as Arnold's conceptual account being taken forward uncritically both by policy makers – as they continue to be – or tweaked by academics for other purposes for their own thinly developed points of view.

This picture of fluctuating engagement reflects the situation more widely in physical education. McNamee (1998, 2005), for example, in a thorough review of the nature and values of physical education makes no mention of Arnold's work even though there are multiple references to his colleagues – David Carr (1979; 1997) and Andrew Reid (1996a; 1996b; 1997). Carr (1998) does refer to Arnold in one of his chapter contributions, but not in flattering terms. In considering the view that physical education can often essentially mean all things to all people, whereby its aesthetic benefits might advance the case for its inclusion within arts programmes and the capacity for reflection could ensure that physical education ought to be included in science programmes and so on *ad infinitum*, Carr notes that Arnold (1979a) writings represents “a particularly extravagant statement of this view” (Carr, 1998, p. 129). Furthermore, we would argue that there has also been a distortion of Arnold's view over the years. Most recently this weakness is evident in Jones et al. (2014, p. 5) where the authors report that “Arnold was influenced by Heidegger” and of how his existential phenomenological account of “being-in-the-world” might connect with Arnold's three categories of productive movement forms (primordial, contextual and existential) and with game-centred approaches to learning and teaching. We consider such linkages to be on particularly thin academic grounds, for Arnold (1979a) makes only one single two sentence reference to Heidegger, and as mentioned earlier, Arnold does not acknowledge the usage of the conceptual term “being-in-the-world” which originates in Heidegger's *Being and Time* or even provides a conceptual account of what he means by its use. This is considerably less than Arnold's (1979a) references to other phenomenologists, such as Merleau-Ponty (seven references), Husserl and Satre (four references each).

Although, Arnold (1979a, p. 168) goes to great lengths to stress in Chapter 6 (Education, Movement and the Curriculum) that his “three dimensions of movement are not mutually exclusive” the reality is that each have come to be interpreted and reinterpreted for quite different purposes. Ironically, Arnold's work has led to an intensification of the academicisation of physical education (see for example Reid, 1996a, 1996b; Stolz, 2013, 2014; Brooker & Macdonald, 1995; Macdonald, Kirk & Braiuka, 1999) because the “about” dimension tends to disproportionately dominate, particularly in senior schooling and higher education programmes. Whereas, the “in” dimension is paid lip-service to – not to mention there tends to be a merging of the “through” and “in” dimensions – as it is “not really understood” or even fully conceptualised and contextualised, and therefore not fully implemented in practice due to the conceptually abstract theories employed (see for example Brown, 2013b, p. 23). Interesting enough, rather than an integrated curriculum which is progressive (or student-centred) which was Arnold's main intention in response to a traditional-liberal form of education, we are left with clearly demarcated “silos” that operate independently from each other in practice. Brown & Penney (2013, p. 40) acknowledge these difficulties due to the “lack of clarity of Arnold's writings” and of how theorisations of his work in physical education have often been taken forward in problematic ways with there being a particular difficulty with how some of Arnold's ideas have been enacted in practice. Certainly, it begs the question: If Arnold's work is not really understood or incoherent, why persist to advocate for his conceptualisation of physical education? It is worth noting that the early trialling of integrated learning and teaching practices often resulted in misunderstandings about what was intended (Thorburn, 2007). Although, arguing from a Scottish point of view, this is further reinforced by Thorburn (2010) who argues that the integration of teaching and learning approaches in physical education have been problematic,



particularly for teacher practitioners who are trying to understand how to integrate content knowledge in practical experiential learning environments that are both personally meaningful for students and fulfil assessment requirements. Certainly, this is no easy undertaking to bring about the successful integration of teaching and learning that is both personally meaningful and authentic for students and at the same time completing necessary assessment tasks as part of the set curriculum. Hence, why Thorburn (2010) suggests “future research” to ascertain if and how this is possible.

In summary, Arnold’s intention to provide an alternative form of education through progressive means turns on his notion of what it means to be person and how we learn has clear limitations. For instance, in Chapter 1 (The Person as an Embodied Consciousness) Arnold (1979a) borrows heavily from philosophy to argue that as human beings we are necessarily embodied and make sense of our world from engaging in the world in a meaningful way. Although, this in itself is not problematic, but his attempts to connect his philosophical ideas as a means for justifying physical education in the curriculum encounter a number of conceptual issues. The notion that knowledge is personal and we construct and make sense from engaging in movement that is meaningful is worth seriously reconsidering. These epistemic claims, albeit popular with postmodern and poststructuralist sources (see for example Rorty, 1980; Lyotard, 1984) which contend that there is no such thing as objective knowledge and truth that is absolute because human beings socially construct their knowledge is philosophically controversial and deeply flawed. Not only are we left with a form of relativism which is deeply problematic, this line of reasoning leaves us with no way of ascertaining what is worth knowing or even a rational criteria in which to compare one knowledge claim against another. Furthermore, Arnold makes no mention whether we can all share in or engage in the same meaningful movement experiences at the same time or whether meaningful movement experience A is far superior educationally than say meaningful movement experience B, and so on. Obviously, this raises a number of rather awkward philosophical questions that range from: If I’m engaging in movement activity X, does this mean that it will always be meaningful for the agent in question? If agent A engages in activity X which is meaningful, will agent B who engages in the same activity have the same meaningful experience as say agent A? Undeniably, the notion of personalisation and choice as curriculum principles are notoriously difficult to put into practice – not to mention educationally restrictive – as evident by the limitations of multi-activity programmes. Consequently, it is only by questioning a number of the complex strands of Arnold’s work that greater clarity and purpose can emerge. This it is argued will be particularly beneficial in terms of providing clarity on aim or aims statements in physical education, which in turn can secure greater policy coherence and practice gains.

### **Some future considerations and concluding comments**

This paper, through deploying a genealogical analysis approach, has sought to interrogate the educational coherence of Peter Arnold’s conceptual account of meaning in movement, sport and physical education. In undertaking this task, we have tried to recognise the contribution of Arnold in scoping out the benefits of experience and movement during a time when academically-inclined curriculum arrangements were in vogue. In saying this, our genealogical analysis of Arnold’s work led us to question a number of fundamental issues around both his engagement with progressive ideals in education and phenomenological-informed interest in personal meaning in movement. For instance, the weakness with Dewey’s progressive education focus on using contemporary contexts as the stimulus for learning – rather than engaging with more abstract knowledge – are evident in Arnold’s account of “learning about”, where the knowledge and understanding contexts that might connect types of physical activity with a rational form of inquiry are insufficiently detailed. We consider that this lack of connectivity is likely to lead to curriculum arrangements where making judgements about curriculum content are difficult as there is no developed basis for ruling learning contexts “in” or “out” (see for example Carr, 1998). This situation might

result in the most undemanding of all models of learning and teaching – the multi-activity model (Ennis, 2013) being continued within schools. Furthermore, Arnold's highly complex holistic learning intentions – based as they are on a somewhat scattered and selective reading of phenomenology and existentialism – have resulted in pedagogical difficulties for teachers from the outset (Thorburn, 2010). Thus, quite why academics (e.g., Brown & Penney, 2013) and policy makers (e.g., Queensland Studies Authority, 2010; Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2012) have over such a long period to emphasise, rather than further develop Arnold-related ideas is of concern. We consider that it is vital in the future that theory serves practice, and practice serves and informs theory better than is the case at present (see for example, Stolz & Pill, 2014a, 2014b). As such, we intend in future papers to outline in more detail future possibilities for theory and practice in physical education and sport pedagogy.

## Notes

1. These scholarly interviews will be published in two parts by Stolz and Kirk in the academic journal *Asia-Pacific Journal of Health, Sport and Physical Education*.

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